

REMARKS

Claims 13, 5-11, and 13-24 are pending in this application after this amendment. Claims 17-19 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 4 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter included therein. New claims 20-24 are presented for examination. Based upon the amendments and remarks included herein, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner objected to the Abstract and claim 16. The Examiner further rejected claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Sameshima* (USP 6,115,568); and rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Sameshima* in view of OKI Technical Review. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

By this amendment, Applicants have amended the claims to more appropriately recite the present invention. Specifically, claims 1 and 6 have been amended to include the elements of claim 4 and claims 7, 8, and 15 have been amended to include the elements of claim 12. It is respectfully submitted that these amendments are being made without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to timely advance prosecution of the present application.

Abstract

The Examiner objected to the Abstract asserting it is more than 150 words. By this amendment, Applicants have amended the Abstract. Based upon this amendment, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants have further made amendments to the specification to correct typographical errors.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claim 16 asserting “are in line 3 should recite “is.” By this amendment, Applicants have amended claim 16 to correct the typographical error. Based upon this amendment, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claim 1 asserting *Sameshima* anticipates the claim by teaching holding member 19b, contacting member 5, and pushing member 17 (See Fig. 2 of *Sameshima*). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s characterization of this reference.

Claim 1, as amended recites, inter alia, a detaching/attaching mechanism in which a contacting member is supported so as to be detachable/attachable from/to a supporting member, wherein, the holding member includes position regulating means for regulating a position of the contacting member with respect to the holding member, when the contacting member is detached from the supporting member, and when the contacting member is detached from the supporting member, the contacting member is provided on the holding member.

In contrast, *Sameshima* discloses, in col. 9, lines 35-46 as follows:

In the situation where the intermediate transfer unit 5 in FIG. 6 or 7 has been mounted in the main body 14, the intermediate transfer belt 5a does not contact the photosensitive drum 1. Since the intermediate transfer unit 5 when mounted on the drawing unit 17 is held in place merely by its own weight, even when the intermediate transfer unit 5 is floating, a protrusion 5k, which is formed on a facing portion 5m of the intermediate transfer unit 5, contacts the facing portion (not shown) of the photosensitive drum 1 and presses the intermediate transfer unit 5 downward, so that the photosensitive drum 1 does not contact the intermediate transfer belt 5a.

As described above, where the intermediate transfer unit 5 has been mounted to the main body 14, if the intermediate transfer belt 5a does not contact the photosensitive drum, the intermediate transfer unit 5 is merely mounted on the drawing unit 7 by its own weight.

The intermediate transfer unit is held in place only when the intermediate transfer belt is in contact with the photosensitive drum. In other words, the intermediate transfer unit is not held in place at all when the intermediate transfer belt is not in contact with the photosensitive drum. For this reason, the image forming apparatus of *Sameshima* has a problem such that, when the intermediate transfer unit is attached/detached to/from the main body, the intermediate transfer unit may unexpectedly move and collide with other members (devices) such as the photosensitive drum causing damage to these members and/or the intermediate transfer unit itself.

Sameshima recognizes this problem teaching, as noted above, a protrusion 5k, which is formed on a facing portion 5m of the intermediate transfer unit 5, contacts the facing portion (not shown) of the photosensitive drum 1 and presses the intermediate transfer unit 5 downward, so that the photosensitive drum 1 does not contact the intermediate transfer belt 5a (the intermediate transfer unit is merely mounted on the drawing unit).

On the other hand, in the detaching/attaching mechanism of the present invention of claim 1, the supporting member includes a position regulating means for preventing the deviation of the contacting member, which is in the free state with respect to the supporting member. The Examiner's attention is respectfully directed to page 21, line 9 through page 22, line 4 of the specification, which provides exemplary support for these claim elements.

With the arrangement described above, in the detaching/attaching mechanism of the present invention, it is possible to prevent the unexpected deviation of the contacting member in the free state. In other words, the problem described with regard to *Sameshima* does not occur. In addition, the claimed arrangement provides for the user being able to sense that the contacting member is securely inserted.

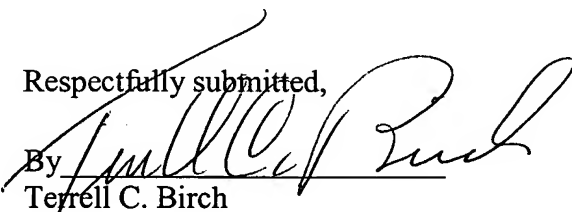
Based upon the argument set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that *Sameshima* fails to teach or suggest a detaching/attaching mechanism in which a contacting member is supported so as to be detachable/attachable from/to a supporting member, wherein, the holding member includes position regulating means for regulating a position of the contacting member with respect to the holding member, when the contacting member is detached from the supporting member, and when the contacting member is detached from the supporting member, the contacting member is provided on the holding member. As *Sameshima* fails to teach or suggest all of the claim elements, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, as amended, is allowable over *Sameshima*. It is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 2-3, and 6 are allowable for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 1 at least based upon their dependency on claim 1. It is further respectfully submitted that claims 6-8 and 12 include elements similar to those set forth above with regard to claim 1 and thus these claims, together with claims dependent thereon, are allowable for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 1.

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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